

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CONSULAR REVIEW TALKS - FIRST WORKING SESSION

REF: MOSCOW 12998

1. INITIAL WORKING SESSION OF CONSULAR REVIEW TALKS TOOK PLACE AUGUST 18 AT MFA RECEPTION HALL. COUNSELOR FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS AND VICE-CONSUL NAPPER WERE RECEIVED BY FIVE MAN SOVIET GROUP HEADED BY ACTING CHIEF OF CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION, N.G. REZNICHENKS. SOVIET SIDE PROVIDED LIST OF MFA PARTICIPANTS IN AUGUST 17 OPENING SESSION INCLUDING REZNICHENKO, HEAD OF PASSPORT AND VISA SECTION, N.G. KUSTOV, COUNSELOR N.M. BULAVIN, COUNSELOR V.P. KOLESNIKOV, 1ST SECRETARY G.A. BOSIKOV, 2ND SECRETARY V.P. SEMIKASHEV AND 3RD SECRETARY V.A. AKULIN. ALL WERE ALSO PRESENT AT AUGUST 18 SESSION WITH EXCEPTIONS OF SEMIKASHEV AND AKULIN.

2. CONSOFFS PRESENTED US PROPOSALS CONCERNING ISSUANCE OF MULTIPLE/ENTRY EXIT VISAS TO LONG-TERM EXCHANGES AND RESIDENT BUSINESSMEN, DRAWING ON DEPARTMENT BACKGROUND PAPERS. WITH REGARD TO LONG-TERM EXCHANGES, CONSOFFS INITIALLY PROPOSED MULTIPLE ENTRY/EXIT VISAS BUT WHEN REZNICHENKO STATED SOVIET OFFICIALS DID NOT LIKE THEIR OWN STUDENTS TO RECEIVE MULTIPLE VISAS,

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CONSOFFS AGREED THAT EXIT VISA VALID FOR DURATION OF STAY

WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE.

3. REGARDING ACCREDITED BUSINESSMEN, CONSOFFS NOTED THAT NON-US CITIZEN HEADS OF US OFFICES ACCREDITED IN MOSCOW HAVE NOT RECEIVED MULTIPLE ENTRY/EXIT VISAS DESPITE EARLIER SOVIET AGREEMENT TO GRANT SUCH VISAS TO THEM. REZNICHENKO AGREED TO LOOK INTO MATTER, OVERRULING BOSIKOV'S COMMENT THAT SOVIET VISA ISSUANCE IS BASED ON NATIONALITY OF APPLICANT, HENCE, IN VISA AGREEMENTS WITH US, SOVIET VISA ISSUANCE COMMITMENTS ARE ONLY TO US NATIONALS.

4. WITH REGARD TO VISAS FOR BUSINESSMEN, REZNICHENKO STATED THAT SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES OF AMTORG, KAMA, ETC. HAVE NOT REQUESTED MFA ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING MULTIPLE/ENTRY/EXIT VISAS BUT THAT US PROPOSAL WOULD BE CONSIDERED. REZNICHENKO SUMMED UP SOVIET RESPONSE BY STATING THAT US PROPOSALS WOULD BE CONSIDERED AND AN ANSWER GIVEN LATER.

5. AFTER CONCLUSION OF US PRESENTATION, SOVIETS RAISED THEIR INITIAL AGENDA ITEM CONCERNING PROCESSING TIMES FOR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF US VISAS. THEY PROPOSED RECIPROCAL REVISION OF PROCESSING TIMES FOR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF VISAS AS FOLLOWS:
A. FOR PERSONS PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED TO EMBASSIES, CONSULATES GENERAL AND THE PERMANENT SOVIET REPRESENTATION AT THE UN AS WELL AS PERSONS TRAVELLING TDY TO THESE INSTITUTIONS - THREE TO FIVE DAYS. (THIS, IN EFFECT, MERELY ADDS UN OFFICIALS AND CONGENS TO ALREADY EXISTING 3 - 5 DAYS RULE.)

B. FOR PERSONS PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED OR TDY TO OTHER OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS (SOVIETS INCLUDED AEROFLOT, AMTORG, KAMA ETC., IN THIS CATEGORY) -SEVEN TO TEN DAYS.

C. TOURISTS (SOVIETS TRAVELING IN GROUPS UNDER INTOURIST AUSPICES) - SEVEN DAYS.

D. MEMBERS OF DELEGATIONS INVITED BY GOVERNMENT OR "SOCIAL" ORGANIZATION - SEVEN DAYS.

E. PERSONS TAKING PART IN OTHER MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, SCIENTIFIC EVENTS - TEN DAYS.
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F. PERSONS IN TRANSIT INTENDING TO STAY NOT MORE THAN FIVE DAYS - THREE TO FIVE DAYS.

G. ALL OTHER APPLICANTS - 10 DAYS.

CATEGORIES AND PROCESSING TIMES ABOVE WERE GIVEN ORALLY BUT SOVIET SIDE AGREED TO PROVIDE WRITTEN LIST AT NEXT MEETING.

6. SOVIET SIDE THEN MOVED ON TO SECOND AGENDA ITEM COVERING TRANSIT OF SOVIET NATIONALS THROUGH US. THEY PROPOSED THAT THEY BE PERMITTED TO TRANSIT US WITHOUT VISA IF THEY HAVE TICKET TRANSFERRING TO AIRLINE LEAVING US NOT MORE THAN 24 HOURS AFTER ARRIVAL, AND IF THEY AGREE NOT TO DEPART AIRPORT. CONSOFFS RESPONDED THAT US AGREEMENT TO PERMIT SOVIETS TO TRANSIT WITHOUT VISAS IS UNLIKELY IN VIEW OF US REQUIREMENT THAT TRANSIT WITHOUT VISA MUST BE EFFECTED WITHOUT CHANGING PLANES. REZNICHENKO REPLIED THAT, IF TRWOV PROVES IMPOSSIBLE, US SIDE EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF IMMEDIATE ISSUANCE OF TRANSIT VISAS UPON APPLICATION OR AT LEAST, MUCH MORE RAPIDLY THAN AT PRESENT.

7. SOVIET INTEREST IN TRANSIT QUESTION APPEARED TO BE VERY HIGH AND ANY UUA FLEXIBILITY IN THIS AREA MIGHT ULTIMATELY BE IMPORTANT IN OBTAINING SOVIET CONCESSIONS ON OTHER POINTS. WHILE TRANSIT WITHOUT VISA FOR SOVIETS MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE, ALTERNATIVE MEANS, SUCH AS MORE WIDESPREAD USE OF LOCALLY OBTAINED WAIVERS (FROM INS VIENNA) MIGHT BE USED TO CUT TRANSIT VISA PROCESSING TIME. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING DEPARTMENT'S INITIAL COMMENTS RE TWO SOVIET AGENDA ITEMS.

8. COMMENT: EMBOFFS IMPRESSED BY CONSTRUCTIVE, BUSINESS-LIKE ATTITUDE OF REZNICHENKO. DURING SESSION, HE INDICATED THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD FRANKLY SUBMIT DESIDERATA AND GIVE "COMPETENT ORGANS" TIME TO MULL THEM OVER. HE NOTED THAT EVEN THOUGH WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RESOLVE ALL ISSUES EXACTLY THE WAY REQUESTING SIDE WISHED, WE CAN MAKE GOOD PROGRESS IF WE REACH REASONABLE COMPROMISES. STOESSEL

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